



India-Saudi Arabia

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The Prime Minister of India visited Saudi Arabia from 28th- 29th October 2019. The visit was the second visit of the Prime Minister to the country in three years.

Key Highlights

- **India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council** was formed to coordinate on strategically important issues. The council will be headed by the Prime Minister and Crown Prince Mohammed and will meet every two years.
 - **India is the fourth country with which Saudi Arabia has formed such a strategic partnership**, after the UK, France and China.
- **12 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs)** on issues related to defence industries, security, air services, renewable energy, medicine products regulation, prevention of narcotics trafficking, and the use of RuPay cards in Saudi Arabia.
 - India also cleared an MoU that will help Hajj pilgrims to travel comfortably in Saudi Arabia during the pilgrimage seasons.
- **Stand on terrorism and other issues:**
 - Both sides condemned terrorism in all forms and stated that no particular religion, race or culture should be linked with international terrorism.
 - Discussed a number of regional conflicts like the **war in Syria** and **Yemen** and sought lasting peace in the Palestinian territories for the establishment of the **independent Palestinian state** based on the pre-1967 borders with "Jerusalem as its capital".
- **Future Investment Initiative:**
 - It is **Saudi Arabia's annual investment forum**, also known as '**Davos in the Desert**'. The informal name derives from the World Economic Forum's annual meeting that is held in Davos, Switzerland, where world leaders discuss and shape agendas for pressing international issues.
 - The Prime Minister of India also invited Saudi companies to invest in India's energy sector as India has set a **target of \$100 billion investment in the sector by 2024**.

- **Cooperation in the Energy Sector:**

- Saudi Arabia is keen to play a role in the **creation of strategic petroleum reserves at Padur in Karnataka**.
- A study is being conducted for the setting up of the **world's largest greenfield refinery at Raigarh in Maharashtra by Saudi Aramco**, Adnoc of the United Arab Emirates and Indian public sector oil companies.

India - Saudi Arabia Ties



- Saudi Arabia is a **strategic partner of India** since the signing of the **Riyadh Declaration in 2010**.
- It is currently **India's second-largest supplier of crude oil** – providing about 18 % of its energy needs. It also has a major role in India's **Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs)**.
The largest supplier of crude oil is Iraq.
- It is **India's 4th largest trade partner**. In 2018-19, the India-Saudi bilateral trade was the US \$ 34.03 billion.
- The **2.6 million-strong Indian community in Saudi Arabia** is the largest expatriate community in the Kingdom and is the 'most preferred community' due to their expertise, sense of discipline, law-abiding and peace-loving nature.
- Haj pilgrimage is another important component of bilateral relations.

Source: TH